

Congress passes Nunes' Highway 99 improvement

Highway 99 is now eligible for an extensive federal face lift thanks to Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Visalia.

Two key provisions written by Rep. Nunes were included in a national transportation bill that was agreed to by members of the House of Representatives and Senate. The first provision designates Hwy 99 as a national high-priority corridor, which makes it eligible for new federal dollars. The second provision makes Hwy 99 eligible to become a federal interstate.

The transportation bill funds projects over a six-year period. The bill will be sent to the President for a signature

"This is a historic opportunity for Highway 99, which has been neglected far too long," Rep. Nunes said. "I look forward to seeing the state and federal governments quickly begin negotiations to bring the roadway into the federal interstate system with the improvements that new federal dollars can provide.

"My goal all along has been to make Highway 99 a six lane freeway from Bakersfield to Sacramento. It now looks like we are on the

right path to see that accomplished."

The federal transportation bill also includes money for several projects in Fresno and Tulare counties, including:

\$7.6 million for Highway 180 improvements in Fresno

\$6.5 million to widen Highway 99 from Goshen to Kingsburg

\$3.2 million for farm-to-market roads in Tulare County

\$2.8 million to improve traffic flows between connected highways in Fresno

\$2.4 million to widen Highway 198 from Highway 99 to State Route 43

\$1.6 million to widen the Ben Maddox Way bridge in Visalia

\$1.2 million for traffic improvements to Ave. 416 near Dinuba

\$1.6 million to widen Friant Road to four lanes with bicycle lanes

\$240,000 for traffic improvements to Willow and



Herndon in Clovis

"Thanks to Congressman Nunes, we've got a green light to move forward with widening Highway 99," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Connie Conway.

Supervisor Conway said the recently approved transportation bill means \$3.2 million in additional farm-to-market funding, and more than \$1 million designated for the Avenue 416 widening project.

"Our efforts with Congressman Nunes will provide more funding for local roads, reduced traffic congestion, and greater safety for motorists," Conway said.

Nunes announces fire grants for communities

Federal funds for a new fire vehicle, training, as well as search and rescue equipment are among a number of grants being awarded to communities in Fresno and Tulare counties, Rep. Devin Nunes announced.

The grants are being made available through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Domestic Preparedness Program. The grants are aimed at helping improve firefighting health and safety programs, as well as expand fire prevention programs.

"I am pleased that communities in the 21st District continue to successfully apply for and get

their fair share of federal funds we appropriated in Congress," Rep. Devin Nunes said. "These grants are a tremendous supplement to the budgets of fire departments in smaller communities, which ensure that our brave firefighters have the best training and new equipment to do their job."

The grant awards include:

- \$233,391 to Hume Lake Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company for vehicle purchase

- \$44,909 to Porterville Fire Department for operations and safety

- \$25,172 to Clovis Fire Department for operations

and safety

Grantees are required to share in the cost of the funded project by providing a match of 20 percent of the project cost. The matching requirement is reduced for small community organizations as follows: Grantees that serve jurisdictions of 50,000 or fewer residents are required to provide a non-Federal cost-share of 10 percent and grantees serving less than 20,000 residents will require a 5 percent match. The match must be in cash without the use of in-kind contributions.